

*The Effect of the Offering*  
*II Corinthians 9:12-15*

**INTRODUCTION**

Anticipation of a special event is sometimes as exciting as the event itself. As you read our text, you almost forget that the special offering for the poor has not been received yet. In the mind of Paul, he is treating it as an accomplished fact. Never have I been in a position to appreciate this passage like I am now. As we move closer to May 24th, the excitement level builds in my heart.

I must confess that I brought the recommendation that we raise \$500,000.00 on one Sunday with some misgivings in my heart. But once the recommendation was made, God began to flood my heart with expectations concerning the offering. As I have seen your excitement growing, it has almost been more than I can take.

This passage helps me. As Paul contemplated the sacrificial offering by the Corinthians, he centered his thoughts on three effects that could be expected. He expected something good to happen to everyone involved in the offering.

**I. THE OFFERING SATISFIES THE NEED**

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people---". Paul states this effect almost as an afterthought. The need in the life of the saints at Jerusalem was real. As Paul presents the offering, you almost lose sight of the need. It is of special significance that he did not delve upon the need of the poor saints as much as he did upon the need of the saints in Corinth to give. Let's look at this statement closely.

The word translated 'service' really translates two words. The King James translates both words "for the administration of this service". 'Administration' is the word from which our word 'deacon' comes. Giving is a way of performing a servant ministry. It is truly a good form of ministry. 'Service' was translated from the term priestly service. It was used in the Old Testament to refer to the activities performed by priests in the Temple. So when we give such an offering, we not only help others, we render service unto the Lord God as a priest. Such giving is truly an act of worship unto the Lord.

'Supplying' is a word that means to 'fill up by adding to'. There is a need, a void, so we, by our gifts, fill up the need like an empty cup. In the Scripture, God is acknowledged as the God who supplies all of our needs. Truly, He is the source of every good and perfect gift. However, we need to be clear about how God does this! God works through people. God would feed the poor saints in Jerusalem, but He would do it through the prospering saints in Corinth. God wants to build a church building on South Indiana Avenue, but He will do it through the offering of the saints that meet on Broadway. God wants to pay off the debt on His buildings on Broadway, but He will do it through the offering of His people. This is the divine method!

This may seem elementary but we need to be reminded of this basic truth. God ministers to others and meets needs through us. When we give, needs are satisfied.

## ***II. THE OFFERING SOLIDIFIES UNITY***

The understanding of the background is essential for the understanding of the wonder of this passage. The Corinthian church was predominately a Gentile church. The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem had problems accepting the Gentiles as a true children of God. Suspicion continued to characterize their attitude toward them. But now, the Gentile Christians are in a position to give proof of the genuineness of their faith. The offering will be proof to the Jews that these Gentiles are really obedient to the faith. "Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the Gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else."

What will the reaction be in Jerusalem? "And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you." The offering will remove barriers to unity and will bring a real sense of brotherhood to the Christian fellowship. The prayers and the yearning hearts will be the outward expression of this.

God uses offerings for this purpose. Evidently, the special offerings taken in the very infancy of the church served the same purpose. As men brought their wealth and laid it at the feet of the Apostle, there was a great sense of unity. When you give sacrificially for the fellowship, you tend to feel yourself to be a vital part of it.

Our church has been lacking in this unity. Our surveys indicate that many of you do not really feel yourself to be a vital part of the church. We need to do more together than just meet together. We need to tackle something big together for the glory of God. We will do this next Sunday. I, along with Paul, can see this renewing a sense of togetherness, a sense of unity to this fellowship.

## ***III. THE OFFERING PROMPTS PRAISE***

This is really the main thrust of this passage. Paul's expectations are expressed here. He anticipated what would happen in Jerusalem when the offering was distributed. He had already written, "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." Then he adds in our text, "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God." So then the offering prompts those who are helped by the gifts to offer praise to God.

Does this not make the offering worthwhile? In Paul's set of values, I believe that it did. Any gift or effort on our part that moves someone to be thankful toward

God is good. Our offering next Sunday has this potential --- especially the mission part of it. Through the years to come the believers that gather in that building to study the Word of God, will offer thanks to God for the generosity of First Baptist Church. I believe the same potential it presents as it relates to our expenditures downtown. I never consider these beautiful facilities without being prompted to thank God for the generosity and sacrifice that provided them. Many of those who made the sacrifices are already gone to be with the Lord. If we will sustain them and improve them, those to come will continue to give thanks to God and we will be included.

Did you notice the last verse of our text? "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" At first, it seems to stand detached from the rest of the passage. In an attempt to connect it with the passage, some have interpreted the 'indescribable' gift to be the great grace that the Lord had bestowed upon the Corinthians. But I believe there is a better way to connect it to the passage proper. Giving prompts praise on the part of the giver. As we give sacrificially and generously, the Lord just fills our hearts with an awareness of how much God has given us in His Son. While it will always be possible to describe our gifts, human language runs out of words when it attempts to explain God sending His Son to die for our sins. He is the "unspeakable gift".

Understanding this will help you to understand several scriptures. You will find all of the great giving experiences described in the scriptures were accomplished by a great experience of praise and joy. Songs of gladness would just break out toward the Lord. This creates great expectations in my heart for next Lord's Day. I just believe that many will be prompted to praise the Lord in a new way through the offering.

***Conclusion:***

Are you ready for the offering? Under the direct leadership of the Lord, we have been considering these two great chapters right at the time of this special offering. God planned it this way. He wants us to recover the Biblical thrill and blessing that comes when God's people give with a willing heart. Next Lord's Day, morning, we will assemble in this place to celebrate the goodness of the Lord and to sow some seed for a future undergirded by the faithful of God.